

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

ISSUE: Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive the items for consent.

A. FUNDING UPDATE

Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA) - The WMATA general manager provided a draft operating and capital budget at the Finance and Administration Committee on December 3, 2015. This proposal calls for an operating budget that does not increase fares, decrease services, or increase jurisdictional subsidy. This was done by using funds WMATA has used for previously for capital purposes instead for operating expenses. In the area of capital spending, WMATA is starting to have discussions with jurisdictional staff about a new Capital Funding Agreement for the next six years. The amounts of capital funding for each jurisdiction have been requested from WMATA.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) - The City submitted applications for the FY 2017 NVTA 70% funds for \$66 million of funds for the Potomac Yard Metrorail project and \$7 million of funds for the West End Transitway in September 2015. These applications should be evaluated by NVTA and VDOT, with preliminary results being provided in March or April of 2016. The City Council approved the set of recommendations endorsed by the Transportation Commission for the FY 2022 CMAQ and RSTP funds at their November 24th meeting.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT): DRPT has begun accepting applications for funding, with a submission deadline of February 1, 2016. The City will apply for a grant to operate the City's Transportation Demand Management Program, with a grant application that was approved by City Council at their December 8th meeting.

Federal Government - At the end of November, the House and Senate Conference Committee passed the Fixed America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which would provide a roadmap for federal transportation funding for the next five years. First indications are that this will provide a modest increase in funding for roads and transit.

After the full U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives approve this bill and the President signs it, a more detailed analysis of the bill will be needed.

Background: The City's transportation program has many sources of funding from federal, state, regional, and local sources. Many of these sources require that submissions be supplied in November, December, and January. The preceding discussion summarizes the significant deadlines that must be met during this time period.

B. WEST END TRANSITWAY

The West End Transitway Policy Advisory Group (PAG) met for the 6th and final time on December 3, 2015 and adopted (8-1) a Resolution of Support recommending that the City continue to advance the Build Alternative as defined through the Alternatives Analysis (AA) study. The Build Alternative includes: service operated in a mix of dedicated lanes and mixed traffic, transit signal technology, full service transit stations, off board fare collection, real time bus information, and improved bike and pedestrians facilities.

The West End Transitway project will be seeking Transportation Commission endorsement in February 2016 and anticipates City Council action in March 2016.

Background: In December 2013, the City kicked off an Alternatives Analysis (AA) / Environmental Documentation for the West End Transitway (also referred to as Corridor C) as part of the Federal NEPA Process. The AA / Environmental Documentation will analyze and refine the alignment as defined by the CWG and City Council and to identify any impacts and potential mitigation associated with the recommended alternative. The study is partially funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and is the first step towards applying for a federal Small Starts grant for project design and construction.

For more information on the West End Transitway, please visit:

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/westendtransitway>

C. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Staff presented an update and received input from the Transportation Commission at its October 21, 2015 meeting. Staff is in the process of presenting the draft recommendations, including the bicycle network, pedestrian case study areas, pedestrian and bicycle strategies, and priority projects to various commissions and boards during the fall, including the Environmental Policy Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Planning Commission, and Alexandria City Public Schools. The comments that staff have received are being incorporated into a draft plan. The draft plan will be released to the public in January 2016, and the public will be invited to provide comments through the Alex Engage process. The plan will be presented to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on January 19, 2016 for their final comments. An additional meeting with the Advisory Committee will be held later in the winter for endorsement, followed by meetings with the Transportation Commission, Planning Commission in early Spring, and to the City Council in April for adoption and an amendment of the Transportation Master Plan.

Background: The City is conducting an update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and developing Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be completed in early 2016. The purpose of this update to the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines will be to:

- Develop a non-motorized system that addresses the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit riders) and is consistent with the vision of the Transportation Master Plan, which encourages transportation options and reduced dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle network and pedestrian case study areas
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide

More information is available at: www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan

D. POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION

Staffs from the City of Alexandria, WMATA, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the National Park Service (NPS) are currently reviewing the draft of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Staff anticipates that the Final EIS will be circulated for public review in late winter 2016, and that FTA and NPS will each sign a Record of Decision (ROD) to close out the environmental process in spring 2016. On December 8, 2015, City Council authorized the City Manager to sign the Net Benefits Agreement with NPS. This agreement sets out a series of mitigation commitments by the City for impacts to the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

The design process for the Metrorail station is continuing. On December 14, staff presented a status update to the public and the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Group (PYMIG) showing progress in the development of the pedestrian bridges and design concept for the station. During the presentation, staff sought feedback to guide further refinement of the concepts. The refined concept will be presented to the public and to PYMIG on January 14, 2016.

Background: The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

For more information on the project, please visit www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard.

E. METROWAY

Metroway ridership during October increased 10 percent from September, and now exceeds ridership on the WMATA Route 9A, a much longer route that shares use of the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway. Ridership continues to be within projections for the project, and is expected to continue growing as new residents move into Potomac Yard and the transitway segment in Arlington reaches completion. Arlington expects to open its section and extend the service to Pentagon City in spring 2016.

Background: During the first round of TIGER grants, the City received \$8.5 million to design and construct the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and East Glebe

Road. The City compiled additional grant funding and \$5.2 million in local funding to design/construct various elements of the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million. The Alexandria portion of the facility, also known as the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway, opened in August 2014.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=58644>

F. **KING STREET METRORAIL STATION**

A notice-to-proceed was issued to the design consultant by WMATA on December 1, 2015. The Design work should be completed by March 31, 2015.

Background: The King Street Metrorail station is Alexandria's largest transit facility, and requires significant updates, expansions, and safety improvements. The City began addressing these needs by requesting WMATA conduct a feasibility study for rebuilding the access facilities at the lot in 2006. The result of this study was released in March, 2008. Through an extensive vetting process with the general public and stakeholders, the City developed a design for the station that improves non-motorized access, bus access, shuttle and taxi access, short term rental car access, and aesthetics. In 2012, the design was endorsed by the Transportation Commission, the City Council, and the Planning Commission. After approval, the design was refined, and the City determined that some of the features of the facility needed to meet City standards rather than WMATA standards. A long discussion between WMATA and the City resulted in a decision that allowed the facility to be designed using City standards. WMATA gave the City a permanent easement to construct a transit facility, if the City maintained the facility in perpetuity. After this agreement, a more detailed design was produced for the facility, and the cost was higher than budgeted. The improvement was placed in the FY 2016 CIP budget process, and eventually acquired sufficient funding to be constructed.

G. **EISENHOWER AVENUE METRORAIL STATION**

The Three Party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this project has been signed by all parties. Work is occurring to determine the best course of action in designing, receiving acceptance of the design and building the improvements at the Eisenhower Metrorail station.

Background: The Eisenhower Avenue Metrorail Station project will use Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and Commonwealth funds to reconstruct the Eisenhower Metrorail station entrance to include improved amenities for transit patrons such as better weather protection and a prominent plaza. This improvement is necessary to accommodate all of the high-intensity growth adjacent and/or in close proximity to the station.

H. **EISENHOWER AVENUE WIDENING**

The contract for Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition services was awarded in October 2015. The ROW acquisition process has started and a kickoff meeting was held. Final plan preparation will continue but plans cannot be finalized until after completion of the ROW acquisition process. Construction is estimated to begin in spring of 2017 and is estimated to take 18 months.

Background: This project creates a multi-modal environment and enhances safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. The at-grade improvements consist of dual left turns at the Eisenhower/Mill Road intersection on westbound Eisenhower Avenue, upgrading the receiving lanes on Mill Road to accept the dual left turns from Eisenhower Avenue, converting the traffic circle at Eisenhower and Holland to a "T" intersection from John Carlyle Street to Holland Lane, upgrading the street lighting and sidewalks in front of the Simpson property, and full width resurfacing of Eisenhower Avenue between Holland Lane and Mill Road.

I. KING STREET/BEAUREGARD STREET IMPROVEMENT

The Phase I bid closed and was evaluated in October. Only one bid was received and came in much higher than the estimate. The bid package is being revised and will be re-advertised in January 2016. If an acceptable responsive bid is received, a contract will be awarded for Phase I of the project.

The Phase I construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2016 and is estimated to be completed in fall 2016. Utility relocation is expected to take 10 -12 months, with completion anticipated in summer 2017. Phase II construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2017 and is estimated to be completed in late 2018.

Background: This project creates a multi-modal environment, enhances safety for pedestrians and motorists, and provides for traffic flow improvements at the King Street and North Beauregard Street intersection. Improvements include additional left turn lanes in each direction on King Street, medians, and a 10' shared use path on portions of King Street. The improvements will increase capacity and safety through the corridor. Once completed, this project will provide a safer intersection with transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians, supporting the City's Complete Streets Policy. Completion of this project will also help mitigate some of the BRAC-133 impacts.

J. MOTORCOACH STUDY AND TASK FORCE

On December 8, 2015, City Council adopted a resolution to reconvene the Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force (Task Force). The reconstituted Task Force includes a change in composition. The main changes include the removal of staff and elected officials as voting members of the Task Force and the addition of Board and Commission Representation.

The Task Force will meet approximately four times between spring and summer 2016. The task force will review locations for short term parking and loading and unloading zones.

Background: Due to pending development along the Waterfront and within Old Town, the City faces the loss of all three of its current short-term motorcoach parking locations (15 spaces total), as well as the loss of an unloading and loading location on the Strand. This loss necessitated a re-examination of motorcoach parking and loading/unloading spaces. The Ad Hoc Motorcoach Task Force, which operated 2004-2005 and 2008-2010, will provide new recommendations to staff regarding future short-term parking and loading/unloading locations. Staff will seek Commission comment and endorsement on these recommendations, which will in turn be transmitted to Council.

K. OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA PARKING STUDY (OTAPS)

The final report of the OTAPS Work Group was presented to City Council at the December 8 legislative meeting. As part of this report, staff prepared a draft work plan outlining how each of these recommendations could be implemented over the next four years. The Council accepted the report, but requested that the work plan will be docketed for additional discussion and action at the second legislative meeting in January.

Background: The Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group was formed to develop consensus on strategies identified by the Waterfront Small Area Plan and recommendations from the 2009 Old Town Area Parking Study. The final 2012 OTAPS report was submitted to Council in February 2013, and reports are posted online at alexandriava.gov/ParkingStudies.

The Work Group was reconvened in 2015 to review parking meter restrictions and residential parking policies in Old Town and updated results of the 2014 Old Town parking occupancy study. The Work Group met eight times between January and August 2015 and discussed a number of tools to address residential and commercial parking issues in the study area. All of the 2015 OTAPS Work Group meeting materials are posted on this website. A summary of the Work Group's recommendations was presented to the Transportation Commission in September.

L. OLD TOWN NORTH SMALL AREA PLAN UPDATE

The Old Town North Small Area Plan Community Charrette was held November 16-20, 2015 at the Canal Center. The charrette was an intense week-long visioning process to kick-off the Old Town North Small Area Plan Update. The vision process allowed participants to identify issues, needs and ideas for a broad range of categories including transportation, housing, land use, and open space. The Plan framework elements were presented to Council on December 12, 2015.

The next meeting of the OTN Advisory Group is December 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. In the coming months, Staff and the Advisory Group will be studying the ideas generated from the charrette to determine feasibility and identify adjustments that may be required as part of the plan update.

Background: On June 23, 2015, the City Council approved the City's Fiscal Year 2016 Long Range Interdepartmental Work Program. Included in the Work Program is an effort to update the Old Town North Small Area Plan (OTN SAP). The current OTN SAP was adopted in 1992. This new planning effort formally began in September 2015 with the appointment of an Advisory Group, and will extend approximately 18 months to January 2017 when Plan adoption is anticipated.

Due to limited funding, a transportation study similar to the scope of the Eisenhower West study will not be done as part of the Plan update; however, transportation studies from several individual developments within the study area will be used to evaluate transportation conditions and impacts for the study area. Staff is currently working on a process to compile these studies into one comprehensive study that will provide a complete analysis and summary of recommendations for the study area.

For more information on the Old Town North Small Area Plan, please visit:
<http://www.alexandriava.gov/86032>

M. **MGM TASK FORCE**

The MGM Task Force, which includes City staff, is working to identify potential transportation solutions in anticipation of the future MGM casino and hotel. The analysis of options is also considering key steps needed, the lead agency or organization, time frame, and costs.

Background: In anticipation of the future MGM casino and hotel at National Harbor in Prince George's County, Maryland, the City has initiated the MGM Task Force comprised of representatives from the City government, and other agencies such as the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, and local businesses to identify issues and to specifically look at what should be done in preparation for the casino's opening, including potential transportation investments. The Task Force is looking at the potential impact of visitors that may come to Alexandria as a result of the casino, and will be charged with establishing relationships with MGM officials and identifying potential areas for collaboration.